

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SCCT-01 AID-05 OMB-01 /065 W
----- 006594

R 050830Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3780

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC HONO

S E C R E T BANGKOK 23247

FOL TEL FROM AMCONSUL SONGKHLA DATED 4 NOV SENT ACTION BANGKOK
REPEATED FOR UR INFO

QUOTE

S E C R E T/NO RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONAL SONGKHLA 198

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINS TH MY

SUBJ: SCHOOL PROTESTS CONTINUE IN MUSLIM SOUTH

1. SOME SCHOOLS OPENED NOVEMBER 3 IN MUSLIM PROVINCES OF YALA, PATTANI AND NARATHIWAT, BUT MOST CONTINUE REMAIN EMPTY DUE TO PROTEST BY THAI TEACHERS WHO DEMAND RETURN OF THREE KIDNAPPED COLLEAGUES ALONG WITH GUARANTEES OF SAFETY FOR TEACHER IN MUSLIM AREAS. LOCAL OFFICIALS EMBARRASSED BY CONFRONTATION, BUT STILL UNABLE CONVINCE PROTESTERS RTG CAN PROVIDE CONTINUING PROTECTION.

2. PROBLEM IS COMPOUNDED BY FACT THAT MANY SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN ON SEVERAL WEEKS' RECESS, SO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS COULD BE USING CONFRONTATION TO DRAG OUT FEW EXTRA DAYS OF VACATION. FEARS ARE REAL, HOWEVER, SINCE RTG DOES NOT HAVE ADEQUATE SECURITY FORCES IN AREA TO PROTECT TEACHERS.

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THAI TEACHERS STILL UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE NOT TO TEACH

IN THAI LANGUAGE IN MANY MUSLIM AREAS (SONGKHLA 163).
MUSLIM RESISTANCE TO INROADS OF THAI CULTURE SHARED BY
SEPARATISTS, BANDITS,
RELIGIOUS ELDERS AND MANY ORDINARY FOLK, SO ISSUE IS EXTREMELY
DIFFICULT ONE FOR RTG TO HANDLE, ESPECIALLY BY FORCE (SONGKHLA
A-19). VICIOUS CIRCLE IS COMPLETED BY FACT THAT PROFI-
CIENCY IN THAI IS ONLY AVENUE FOR MUSLIMS TO IMPROVE THEIR
STANDING IN THAI SOCIETY.

3. BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO ACCEPT PRESS REPORTS ON
SITUATION HERE WITH MANY GRAINS OF SALT. STORY THAT TEACHERS'
PROTECTION GROUP DEMANDS OUSTER OF MALAYSIAN POLICE STATIONED
IN BETONG SOUNDS CURIOUSLY LIKE VIEWS OF LT. GEN. SAN
CHITBATIMA, DIRECTOR OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN AREA.
SINCE SAN HAS BEGUN CAMPAIGN BY COOPTING NUMBER OF MEDIA
AND TEACHERS, THIS COULD BE HIS OWN INPUT TO DIVERT ATTENTION
FROM MAIN CONFRONTATION. SAN'S PIQUE EXPRESSED IN NOVEMBER 3
BANGKOK POST ARTICLE IS FURTHER EVIDENCE HIS NEW STYLE OF
USING MEDIA. HE HAS LONG DISTRUSTED INTERIOR MINISTRY
AND FELT FRUSTRATED BY BANGKOK OFFICIALS DURING HIS
STINT AS PEACE-KEEPING DIRECTOR LAST YEAR. GOING PUBLIC
NOW SEEMS ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE BANGKOK THAT HIS POLICIES
SHOULD COMMAND PRECEDENCE.

4. SAN TOLD ME A WEEK AGO THAT WHILE HE HAD RECEIVED BUDGETARY
FUNDS FOR 6 MONTHS CI OPERATIONS IN SURAT PROVINCE, HE HAS
YET TO GET ANY PROMISE OF PER DIEM FROM RTG ON DEEP SOUTH
OPERATIONS. MAJOR MOVEMENT OF RTG FORCES NOW UNDERWAY IN
SURAT MAKES IT UNLIKELY SAN WILL HAVE RESOURCES TO DEPLOY
IN DEEP SOUTH ANYWAY, AND PER DIEM ISSUE COULD WELL BE
TIMELY EXCUSE FOR EVENTUAL INABILITY TO SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT
INSTABILITY IN MUSLIM PROVINCES. CASTRODALE. UNQUOTE.WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MOSLEMS, POLITICAL STABILITY, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO23247
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750384-0138
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751174/aaaacnsl.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <24 JUL 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SCHOOL PROTESTS CONTINUE IN MUSLIM SOUTH
TAGS: PINS, TH, MY
To: STATE CINCPAC HONOLULU
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006